

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4354
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

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SUBJECT: FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV'S
MARCH 10 COMMENTS ON BERLIN

REF:(A) BERLIN 5506(B) BERLIN 5544: (C) BERLIN 5556

SUMMARY. ABRASIMOV CLARIFICATION OF HIS MARCH 10 COMMENTS
ON ALLIED RIGHTS IN EAST BERLIN APPEARED IN LATEST ISSUE
OF EAST GERMAN MAGAZINE FREIE WELT, MOTIVATING DER TAGES-
SPIEGEL TO COMMENT THAT SOVIET THREAT TO ALLIED ACCESS
RIGHTS IN EAST BERLIN HAS BEEN ELIMINATED BUT THAT UN-
PLEASANT IMPLICATIONS REMAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ISSUE OF THE EAST GERMAN MAGAZINE FREIE WELT WHICH
HIT THE STANDS ABOUT MARCH 31 CONTAINED AN " AUTHORIZED"
TEXT OF THE ABRASIMOV CLARIFICATION OF HIS MARCH 10 PRESS
CONFERENCE COMMENTS ON ALLIED ACCESS RIGHTS IN EAST BERLIN.
ABRASIMOV WAS ORGINALLY QUOTED BY ADN AND NEUES
DEUTSCHLAND AS HAVING ANSWERED A QUERY CONCERNING ALLIED
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RIGHTS IN EAST BERLIN AS FOLLOWS: " AS FOR THE RIGHTS OF
THE THREE WESTERN POWERS, THE MILITARY RIGHTS IN THE SO-
CALLED EASTERN PART OF THE CITY, I HAVE TO SAY THAT
SOMETHING LIKE THAT DOES NOT EXIST." THIS COMMENT WAS
CLARIFIED A DAY LATER BY THE SOVIET EMBASSY, WHICH SAID
THAT IN REPLY TO A QUESTION ABRASIMOV HAD SADI ONLY THAT THE
EASTER SECTOR OF BERLIN DOES NOT EXIST. FREIE WELT HAS

PRINTED (ACCORDING TO DER TAGESSPIEGEL) AN
"AUTHORIZED" VERSION OF ABRASIMOV'S CLARIFICATION WHICH,
IN INFORMAL USBER TRANSLATION, READS, " AS FOR THE MILITARY
RIGHTS OF THE THREE WESTERN POWERS IN THE 'EASTERN
PART OF THE CITY' I MAY SAY THAT SUCH A PART OF THE CITY
DES NOT EXIST; THERE EXISTS ONLY THE CAPITAL OF THE GDR."

2. IN APRIL 1 ISSUE OF TAGESSPIEGEL IT IS REPORTED THAT IN
THE DAYS FOLLOWING ABRASIMOV'S MARCH 10 PRESS CONFERENCE,
THE SOVIET TRIED TO EXPLAIN TO THE ALLIES AND WESTERN
JOURNALISTS THAT THEIR "FRIENDS" IN THE GDR HAD MIS-
UNDERSTOOD ABRASIMOV.

3. APRIL 1 TAGESSPIEGEL CARRIED AN EDITORIAL
ON THIS MATTER BY PAPER'S POLITICAL EDITOR JOACHIM BOELKE.
TEXT OF EDITORIAL FOLLOWS:
BEGIN TEXT
A SOVIET CORRECTION.

AFTER SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRAISMOV, IN A PRESS CONFERENCE
ON MARCH 10, HAD ALSO DEALT WITH QUESTIONS OF THE STATUS
OF BERLIN, THE COMMUNIST NEWS AGENCY ADN AND THE OFFICIAL
SED ORGAN " NEUES DEUTSCHLAND" INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING
STATEMENT: "AS FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE THREE WESTER
POWERS, THE MILITARY RIGHTS IN THE SO-CALLED EASTERN
PART OF THE CITY, I HAVE TO SAY THAT SOMETHING LIKE THAT
DOES NOT EXIST." THIS SENTENCE COULD WELL BE UNDERSTOOD
AS A THREAT TO THE EXERCISE OF ALLIED PRESENCE IN EAST
BERLIN BY MILITARY PATROLS.

SUBSEQUENTLY, A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF ABRASIMOV'S
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REMARKS BY THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS OF THE PRESS CON-
FERENCE SHOWED THAT THE STATEMENT AS NOT MADE IN THAT
FORM. IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS, THE SOVIETS THEMSELVES
STROVE TO EXPLAIN TO THE WESTERN ALLIES AS WELL AS
TO WESTERN JOURNALISTS THAT THEIR "FRIENDS" IN THE GDR
HAD MISUNDERSTOOD THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR. NOW, A
GDR PUBLICATION HAS ALSO PUBLISHED AN "AUTHORIZED"
VERSION OF THE ABRASIMOV REMAKR AS WE REPORTED
YESTERDAY. ACCORDING TO THAT ARTICLE, ABRASIMOV SAID:
"AS FOR THE MILITARY RIGHTS OF THE THREE WESTERN POWERS
IN THE 'EASTERN PART OF THE CITY' I MAY SAY THAT SUCH
A PART OF THE CITY DOES NOT EXIST; THERE EXISTS ONLY THE
CAPITAL OF THE GDR."

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE? WHILE THE SECOND VERSION DOES
NOT CONTAIN ANY THREAT, IT STILL CONTAINS AN IMPLICATION
EMBARRASSING TO THE WESTERN POWERS. ABRASIMOV HINTED
THAT HE NO LONGER INTERPRETED THE RIGHTS OF THE WESTERN
POWERS IN EAST AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE FOUR POWER
STATUS FOR ALL BERLIN BUT AS A CONCESSION OF THE SOVIETS

VALID AS LONG AS THE SOVIET VALUE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OF
THEIR PERSONNEL INTO WEST BERLIN. FURTHERMORE, AS LONG
AS A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING EXISTS, THE WESTERN POWERS
NEED NOT BE ALARMED ABOUT THOSE RESERVATIONS CONCERNING THE STATUS OF
EAST BERLIN THAT HAVE BEEN REMOVED
BY THE GDR. THIS IS A GERMAN MATTER. SUCH REASONING
WAS CONVEYED ALMOST LITERALLY IN THAT FORM TO REPRESENTA-
TIVES OF THE WESTERN ALLIES BY ABRASIMOV.

THE IRONICAL ASPECT OF THE MATTER IS THE FACT THAT
ABRASIMOV ADDRESSES THE WRONG PEOPLE. THE WEST GERMAN
GOVERNMENT IS NOT ALARMED ABOUT THE CHANGE OF STATUS IN
BERLIN, WHICH TROUBLES THE ALLIES MUCH MORE THAN
ABRASIMOV'S REMARKS. THEY NEED GERMAN CONCERN AS A BASIS
FOR THEIR REACTIONS. END TEXT
GEORGE

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